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FOCUS, NUCLEAR, MISSILES & OTHER
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मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

Iran

Iran, China, Russia successfully conduct night time shooting operations

Tehran Times, March 17, 2023

The participating troops from Iran, China, and Russia have successfully completed nighttime shooting operations against aerial targets, the exercise's spokesperson Rear Admiral Mostafa Tajeddini said on Friday. In the northern Indian Ocean, the Joint Maritime Security Belt Exercise 2023, which includes the participation of surface and aerial forces from the three nations, got underway on Thursday night. Based on the remarks by Tajeddini, the drill was based on a common tactical language used by Iranian naval forces, including the Iranian Army and IRGC naval forces as well as Chinese and Russian ones. He emphasized the need for cooperation and specific directions during midnight firing operations against airborne targets.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/483014/Iran-China-Russia-successfully-conduct-nighttime-shooting-operations>

FM: Iran-IAEA Cooperation on Right Track

Fars News Agency, March 17, 2023

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian in a telephone conversation with EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell underlined that the cooperation between Tehran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is moving on the right track. During his Thursday night phone conversation with Borrell, Amir Abdollahian discussed the nuclear talks to remove sanctions, the Ukraine war, and the cooperation between the IAEA and Iran.

The top Iranian diplomat said that Iran has stressed its opposition to the ongoing war in Ukraine, and Tehran's readiness for contributing to any peace talk, which he said he will also pursue in his upcoming Moscow visit.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14011226000129/FM-Iran-IAEA-Cperain-n-Righ-Track>

Iran asks the West to press Ukraine to verify drone supply charges

Tehran Times, March 17, 2023

The Iranian foreign minister on Thursday asked the West to press Kiev to hold "formal dialogue" rather than continuing to level "unsubstantiated charges" that Tehran is providing drones to Russia in its war against Ukraine. "We have previously addressed the core cause of the present crisis in Ukraine as well as Iran's opposition to war," Hossein Amir Abdollahian told Josep Borrell, the head of the EU foreign policy, over the phone. Iran has been charged with supplying Russia with military drones for use in the conflict with Ukraine by Western nations. The accusations have been unequivocally denied by Tehran.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/483012/Iran-asks-the-West-to-press-Ukraine-to-verify-drone-supply-charges>

Iran's top security official to visit Iraq

Tehran Times, March 18, 2023

Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, is set to travel to Iraq, after visiting China and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Iraq is Iran's second trading partner. Iran's trade with Iraq stands at \$10 billion and maintaining

this volume of trade requires addressing some “security challenges” imposed on the relations between the two countries, accelerating economic agreements, and facilitating banking cooperation, IRNA said. Earlier, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian had said that Shamkhani would pay a visit to Iraq. Amir Abdollahian implied that the visits by Shamkhani to the United Arab Emirates and Iraq were done in full coordination with the foreign ministry.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/483060/Iran-s-top-security-official-to-visit-Iraq>

Iran, China, Russia conduct joint naval operations

Tehran Times, March 18, 2023

During a coordinated naval war exercise in the northern Indian Ocean, the armed forces of Iran, China, and Russia have conducted a variety of tactics and operations, including rescuing hijacked vessels. On Friday, the Iranian, Chinese, and Russian navies participated in the major stage of the 2023 Maritime Security Belt naval drills in the northern Indian Ocean. Rear Admiral Mostafa Tajoddini, a spokesman for the exercises, said that the naval forces of the three nations had trained under realistic circumstances in a coordinated effort to free two trade boats that had been seized in international seas by pirates. An Iranian Navy SH-3 helicopter was dispatched for reconnaissance and search after the two target liners sent mayday signals to the Maritime Rescue and Coordination Centre (MRCC) of Chabahar port in southeast Iran, he added.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/483062/Iran-China-Russia-conduct-joint-naval-operations>

N. Chief: Iran Exporting Nuclear Medicine to 9 States

Fars News Agency, March 22, 2023

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami lauded the country's astonishing achievements in nuclear medicine technologies, and said that nine states have purchased Tehran-made nuclear medicine products. Eslami made the remarks in an interview with the IRIB's Arabic service, Al-Alam. Referring to messages Iran has received from the Saudi side that shows Riyadh is pleased with the recent rapprochement with Tehran, the AEOI head said the country will definitely engage in nuclear cooperation with Saudi Arabia. He added in order to serve the people of Saudi Arabia, the two countries will work in the field of radio medicine.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14020102000205/N-Chief-Iran-Expring-Nclear-Medicine-9-Saes>

SNSC Spokesman Denies US Claim about Iran's Involvement in Syria Attack

Fars News Agency, March 26, 2023

Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Spokesman Keyvan Khosravi rejected the US allegation about Tehran's involvement air raids on the US bases in Syria, and further warned of his country's prompt response to any attack by the US occupation forces on the bases that have been established at the Damascus government's request for fighting terror groups. The SNSC spokesman issued the warning on Saturday after Washington claimed that Tehran has been involved in air raids on the US bases in Syria. In

response, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin confirmed that, at President Joe Biden's direction, he had ordered the "precision airstrikes in Eastern Syria" against "facilities used by groups affiliated with Iran".

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14020106000072/SNSC-Spokesman-Denies-US-Claim-ab-Iran's-Involvement-in-Syria-Aack>

Tehran warns US of swift response to any attack on bases in Syria

Tehran Times, March 26, 2023

Iran warned on Saturday that it will give a quick response to "any pretext" for an attack on its bases inside Syria established at the request of the Damascus government to fight terrorism. Keyvan Khosravi, spokesman for Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), made the warning after U.S. officials claimed that Iran has been involved in attacks on U.S. bases inside Syria. According to Iran's Arabic-language Al-Alam TV, more than 20 rockets were reportedly fired on Saturday against two illegal bases belonging to American occupation forces in eastern Syria. The television specified the targets as American outposts based near the al-Omar oilfield and the Koniko gas field in Syria's Dayr al-Zawr Province.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/483152/Tehran-warns-US-of-swift-response-to-any-attack-on-bases-in-Syria>

Iran to invite Saudi king to Tehran as Raisi invited to Riyadh

Tehran Times, March 28, 2023

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has said like Saudi Arabia his country also intends to invite the Saudi king

to visit Iran. Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz has sent an invitation letter to Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi asking him to pay a visit to Riyadh. "We will also send a similar invitation to the King of Saudi Arabia," Amir Abdollahian told Al Jazeera on Monday. Tehran and Riyadh reached an agreement in early March to resume diplomatic relations after years of hostility. The talks were brokered by China. According to the National, Chinese President Xi Jinping said on Tuesday that his country is ready to support a follow-up process between Saudi Arabia and Iran to restore diplomatic relations.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/483198/Iran-to-invite-Saudi-king-to-Tehran-as-Raisi-invited-to-Riyadh>

Iran hopes strategic pact with Russia finalized 'in a month'

Tehran Times, March 30, 2023

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian on Wednesday expressed hope that the long-term strategic cooperation agreement between Tehran and Moscow will be finalized in "less than a month." "Reviews on the long-term strategic cooperation agreement between the two countries have been finalized in Russia. Iran has also examined it. I hope that in less than a month, the final revision of the agreement will be carried out by Iran's Foreign Ministry," Amir Abdollahian said in a joint press conference in Moscow with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov, Press TV reported. In his visit to Moscow which began on Tuesday night, Amir Abdollahian was accompanied by a high-level economic and political team. Tehran and Moscow signed a 10-year

cooperation deal in 2001 that was lengthened to 20 years through two five-year extensions.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/48322/0/Iran-hopes-strategic-pact-with-Russia-finalized-in-a-month>

China hails joint military exercises with Iran and Russia

Tehran Times, March 30, 2023

China on Thursday hailed the recent joint naval exercises with Russia and Iran in the Sea of Oman, saying the drills boosted the ability of their navies to conduct diversified maritime missions. The military drills further deepened friendship and practical cooperation among the three countries, Chinese defense ministry spokesman Tan Kefei told a news briefing. Senior Colonel Tan said the three nations sent forces including 12 ships, special operations and diving units to participate in the drills. China, Iran and Russia conducted joint naval exercises in the Sea of Oman from March 15-19. The military maneuver, dubbed the Marine Security Belt 2023, aimed to strengthen regional security. Observers from Pakistan and Kazakhstan also participated in the drills.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/48322/2/China-hails-joint-military-exercises-with-Iran-and-Russia>

Iraq

Questions linger as US-backed Kurd forces say Iraq chopper crash victims were theirs

Al-Monitor, March 17, 2023

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) said two helicopters carrying its elite forces had crashed en route to Sulaiymaniyah, the

Kurdistan region's second-largest city. Sulaiymaniyah is the stronghold of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), the second most powerful party in the Kurdistan region. The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) said Thursday that a single helicopter had crashed in the district of Chamanke in Dohuk province. The SDF added that the units were part of an "exchange of expertise" in the fight against the Islamic State. Among the victims was Sherwan Kobane, a nephew of the SDF's commander in chief, Mazlum Kobane, who is also known as Mazlum Abdi.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2023/03/questions-linger-us-backed-kurd-forces-say-iraq-chopper-crash-victims-were-theirs>

Explainer: How Iraq planted the seeds for China's Saudi-Iran deal

Al-Monitor, March 18, 2023

Iran and Saudi Arabia reached an agreement last Friday to resume diplomatic relations. The negotiations between the two countries had been initiated by Iraq, but the final agreement was reached and signed by the two countries' national security chiefs in Beijing. Both countries afterward praised Iraq's prior mediation, and Baghdad hopes to find a further role for itself. The relationship between Tehran and Riyadh had been severed since 2016. Iraq has a long border with both countries and is home to millions of Shiites and Sunnis. Between 2019 and 2021, a number of attacks occurred against Saudi Arabia, some of which were blamed on Iraqi militias backed by Iran.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2023/03/explainer-how-iraq-planted-seeds-chinas-saudi-iran-deal>

Iran, Iraq security officials sign border protection agreement

Arab News, March 19, 2023

Iran's top security official on Sunday signed a deal with Iraqi authorities for "protection" of their common border, the Iraqi prime minister's office said, months after Tehran struck Kurdish opposition groups in Iraq's north. Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region hosts camps and rear-bases operated by several Iranian Kurdish factions, which Iran has accused of serving Western or Israeli interests in the past. In November, Iran launched cross-border missile and drone strikes against several of the groups in northern Iraq, accusing them of stoking the nationwide protests triggered by the death in custody last September of Iranian Kurdish woman Mahsa Amini. Ali Shamkhani, who heads Iran's Supreme National Security Council, inked the deal with his Iraqi counterpart Qassem Al-Araji during a visit to Baghdad, the statement said.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2271731/middle-east>

NSA meet: India, Iraq to boost defence, counter-terror & security related partnership

The Economic Times, March 24, 2023

India and its traditional Arab world partner Iraq have decided to beef up their defence, counter-terror and security related cooperation as Qasem Al-Araji, National Security Adviser of Iraq met NSA Ajit Doval here on Friday. The visit of the Iraqi NSA is the first Cabinet Minister-level visit from Iraq to India in the last seven years. The Iraqi NSA was earlier the Minister of

Interior in 2016-18. He has been the NSA from July 2020 since the previous government. During the visit, both NSA's had extensive dialogue on a vast area of mutual interest. Both sides discussed various aspects of ongoing bilateral cooperation. They agreed to enhance defence cooperation, counter terrorism efforts and strengthen security linkages. They also exchanged views on the recent developments in their respective regions, ET has learnt.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/nsa-meet-india-iraq-to-boost-defence-counter-terror-security-related-partnership/articleshow/98976335.cms?from=mdr>

To end crimes.. Kirkuk supports security forces with drones and a thermal cameras system

Iraqi News Agency, March 30, 2023

The Governor of Kirkuk, Rakan Saeed Al-Jubouri, announced Thursday the allocation of 13 billion Iraqi dinars from the amounts of the Emergency Support for Food Security and Development Law, to support the security forces in the province and secure their needs, indicating that the support included equipping with drones and a system of thermal cameras. Al-Jubouri told the Iraqi News Agency (INA): "The Kirkuk administration has allocated 13 billion Iraqi dinars to support the security forces and secure their necessary needs to confront ISIS terrorist gangs and enhance security in the province." He added, "The support includes equipping the advanced headquarters command with drones and installing a thermal camera system to reduce crimes, in addition to building

appropriate headquarters for the security forces."

<https://ina.iq/eng/25724-to-end-crimes-kirkuk-supports-security-forces-with-drones-and-a-thermal-cameras-system.html>

Israel

ULTRASAT program: Israel Aerospace Industries to develop, build country's first astronomical observation satellite

Israel Defense, March 19, 2023

Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) has signed an agreement with the Weizmann Institute of Science and Israel's Ministry of Science, under which it will design, develop, and build the ULTRASAT (Ultraviolet Transient Astronomy Satellite), Israel's first astronomical observation satellite. The satellite, which incorporates ground-breaking and unique technological capabilities, will be developed by IAI, which has extensive experience in observation missions from space, both for military and civilian applications. Together with partners in Israel and elsewhere, such as Elop, DESY (the German Electron Synchrotron), and NASA, which will launch the satellite into space. DESY and NASA are also participating in the scientific research program.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57615>

Dubai Police to purchase Airobotics's Iron-Drone systems

Israel Defense, March 21, 2023

Israeli company Airobotics, a developer and provider of autonomous drone infrastructures for smart cities, announced that it signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Dubai Police in early March, as part of which the

police will acquire Iron-Drone systems, an autonomous counter drone system developed by Airobotics that was launched earlier this month, designed to neutralize suspicious drones that cannot be neutralized by electronic jamming. In addition, as part of the collaboration with the Dubai Police, the company will operate to upgrade the systems and adapt them to the operational needs of the Dubai Police and integrate them into the Dubai airspace. According to the company, the agreement signed with the Dubai police also includes adapting the company's system to the needs of the police specifically and its integration into the airspace, for the first time in Dubai in particular and in the world in general.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57639>

New discoveries and advances ranging from the BRICS countries to Israel, Japan and South Korea

Israel Defense, March 26, 2023

In the previous article we discussed new discoveries and scientific advances ranging from the United States of America to Russia, Great Britain, Germany and Finland. In this article we will look at breakthroughs in further countries. For the first time the Hayabusa 2 probe of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's (JAXA) has brought back gas from asteroid 162173 Ryugu (the orbit of which is close to that of the Earth) discovered in 1999. The mission was launched on 3 December. On 27 June 2018, the probe reached the asteroid orbiting it at a distance of about 20 kilometres. After about one year and a half of measurements and surveys, the probe began its manoeuvres to approach the Earth on 13 November 2019, carrying the

samples collected on Ryugu's surface in a capsule.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57682>

BIRD Aerosystems delivers Falcon 7X with AMPS, AeroShield-M POD to undisclosed customer

Israel Defense, March 27, 2023

BIRD Aerosystems, an Israeli company which provides global innovative defense technology and solutions that protect fleets, armored vehicles, and ground assets of governments and related agencies, announced last week that it has delivered a Falcon 7X aircraft installed with its AMPS Airborne Missile Protection System and Aeroshield-M (Mini) POD to an undisclosed customer. The aircraft has completed a series of flight tests and certifications and will enter operational use by the customer. The installation of the AMPS system was conducted by the OEM at the Dassault Aviation factory in France, with the support of BIRD which was responsible for the installation, upervision, integration, and testing of the system.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57697>

Controp to start local manufacturing of its products in India

Israel Defense, March 27, 2023

Controp Precision Technologies, an Israeli company specializing in the field of electro-optics IR defense and homeland security solutions, announced today (Sunday) that it signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Indian-based Paras Defense and Space Technologies and as part of the MoU, the companies will be setting up a

joint venture (JV) in India for manufacturing electro-optic systems for various applications. Hagai Azani, Controp's CEO, said that the MoU is a first step aiming to expand both companies' presence in the defense sector in India.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57699>

Israel successfully launches "Ofek 13" satellite

Israel Defense, March 29, 2023

The Israeli Ministry of Defense's Satellite Administration in the Directorate of Defense Research & Development, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) successfully launched the "Ofek 13" satellite into space in the early hours of the morning (Wednesday). The launch took place at a test site in central Israel using a "Shavit" launcher. The satellite successfully entered orbit, has begun transmitting data, and completed an initial series of inspections in accordance with original launch plans. IMoD and IAI engineers will continue pre-planned inspections before it begins full operational activity in the near future.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57722>

Kuwait

US Pentagon provides support for Kuwait's KC-130 fleet

Airforce Technology, March 20, 2023

The US Department of Defense (DoD) has extended its KC-130J services contract to support the tanker aircraft fleet of the Kuwait Air Force. The contract was awarded to the Oklahoma-based Aviation Training Consulting LLC for \$28m on 16

March. Work will be performed in Altus, Oklahoma (13%); and Kuwait (87%), and is expected to be completed in March 2025.

The KC-130J is the latest of Lockheed Martin's extended-range tanker aircraft, which is based on the C-130 Hercules transport aircraft. It is the latest variant that supports the US Marine Corps. While the tanker is widely considered a reliable aircraft, especially considering its long-lasting use, according to a GlobalData forecast the DoD's spending on the KC-130J will be up and down between 2023-33.

<https://www.airforce-technology.com/news/pentagon-supports-kuwaiti-government-kc130j-fleet/>

Lebanon

At Lebanon border, Israeli minister vows reprisal for rare bomb attack

Reuters, March 16, 2023

Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant on Thursday said those responsible for a rare roadside bomb attack this week which officials said may have involved Lebanon's Hezbollah, would be found and held accountable.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/lebanon-border-israeli-minister-vows-reprisal-rare-bomb-attack-2023-03-16/>

Saudi Arabia

With Saudi deals, US, China battle for influence in Mideast

AP News, March 16, 2023

In a matter of days, Saudi Arabia carried out blockbuster agreements with the world's

two leading powers — China and the United States. Riyadh signed a Chinese-facilitated deal aimed at restoring diplomatic ties with its arch-nemesis Iran and then announced a massive contract to buy commercial planes from U.S. manufacturer Boeing. The two announcements spurred speculation that the Saudis were laying their marker as a dominant economic and geopolitical force with the flexibility to play Beijing and Washington off each other. They also cast China in an unfamiliar leading role in Middle Eastern politics. And they raised questions about whether the U.S.-Saudi relationship — frosty for much of the first two years of President Joe Biden's term — has reached a détente.

<https://apnews.com/article/saudi-arabia-china-iran-boeing-biden-d1aad0d6aae71993d7bc7e6336006a72>

Saudi Arabia Aiming for Complete Nuclear Fuel Cycle

Arms Control Association, March 2023

Saudi Arabia plans to enrich its domestic uranium stocks to ensure its ability to complete “the entire nuclear fuel cycle,” the kingdom's energy minister, Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, told a mining and industry conference in Riyadh on Jan. 11. He said the process would include “the production of yellowcake, low enriched uranium and the manufacturing of nuclear fuel both for our national use and of course, for export,” Reuters reported. The minister's comments expanded on his 2019 commitment to enrich domestic uranium to fuel the country's planned nuclear power program, which is expected to include

building 16 nuclear reactors over the next 20 to 25 years at a cost of more than \$80 billion.

<https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2023-03/news/saudi-arabia-aiming-complete-nuclear-fuel-cycle>

India, Saudi Arabia to explore new cooperation in space

Arab News, March 17, 2023

India is working on new space collaborations with Saudi Arabia, focusing on downstream applications and satellite manufacturing, the Indian Space Research Organization said on Friday. ISRO, India's national space agency, has been cooperating with the Kingdom under a 2010 agreement with King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology. There has been growing interest in expanding the collaboration since 2018, following the formation of the Saudi Space Commission, whose CEO, Dr. Mohammed Al-Tamimi, visited India last week. The trip aimed at enhancing "joint cooperation between the two countries in the future of the space sector," Al-Tamimi said on Twitter after meeting with ISRO officials and representatives of the industry, as well as visiting research centers.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2270621/world>

US, Saudi Arabia complete first counter-drone exercise at Red Sands testing facility

Alarabiya News, March 24, 2023

The US and Saudi Arabia completed their first joint counter-drone exerciselast week at a new military testing center in Riyadh, according to the head of the United States Central Command (CENTCOM).

The exercise was the first of its kind between the two militaries, and US officials hope to replicate this with other armies in the region. The Red Sands Experimentation Center had been under discussion for some time. The US military said it would serve as an innovative approach to training and readiness between Washington and its Middle East partners. Last week's exercises were not highly publicized, but officials have said this was just the beginning of what they hope would be more in-depth and sophisticated drills.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2023/03/24/US-Saudi-Arabia-complete-first-counter-drone-exercise-at-Red-Sands-testing-facility>

Syrian Arab Republic

Syria's Assad says would welcome more Russian troops

Arab News, March 16, 2023

Syrian President Bashar Assad said on Thursday that he would welcome any Russian proposals to set up new military bases and boost troop numbers in the Middle Eastern country, suggesting Russia's military presence there should become permanent. When Russia intervened in the Syrian Civil War in 2015, it helped tip the balance in Assad's favor, ensuring the Syrian leader's survival despite Western demands that he be toppled. Assad, who met President Vladimir Putin in the Kremlin on Wednesday, has supported Russia's war in Ukraine and told Russia's state news agency RIA that Damascus recognizes the territories claimed by Russia in Ukraine.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2269591/middle-east>

Israeli airstrike targets Syria's Aleppo airport: Statement

Alarabiya News, March 22, 2023

An Israeli airstrike hit near Syria's Aleppo airport early Wednesday, causing "material damage" and shutting down operations there, Syrian officials said, while regional intelligence sources said the attack hit an Iranian arms depot. Israel has for years carried out attacks against what it has described as Iran-linked targets in Syria, where Tehran's influence has grown since it began supporting President Bashar al-Assad in the civil war that started in 2011. In the third attack on Aleppo airport in six months, Israel launched "a number of missiles from the Mediterranean Sea, west of the coastal city of Latakia, at 3:55 a.m.", the Syrian defence ministry said in a statement on state media.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2023/03/22/Israeli-air-strike-targets-Syria-s-Aleppo-airport-Statement>

U.S. Conducts Airstrikes in Syria in Response to Deadly UAV Attack

U.S. Department of Defense, March 23, 2023

Earlier today, a U.S. contractor was killed and five U.S. service members and one additional U.S. contractor were wounded after a one-way unmanned aerial vehicle struck a maintenance facility on a Coalition base near Hasakah in northeast Syria at approximately 1:38 p.m. local time. The intelligence community assess the UAV to be of Iranian origin. "At the direction of President Biden, I authorized U.S. Central Command forces to conduct precision airstrikes tonight in eastern Syria against

facilities used by groups affiliated with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC)," said Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III. "The airstrikes were conducted in response to today's attack as well as a series of recent attacks against Coalition forces in Syria by groups affiliated with the IRGC."

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3339691/us-conducts-airstrikes-in-syria-in-response-to-deadly-uav-attack/>

Ambassador Sabbagh: OPCW must be restored to its technical nature after many sides lost confidence in it

Syrian Arab News Agency, March 24, 2023

The politicization of the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and its negative acts towards Syria have undermined the professionalism of its work and lost confidence in its impartiality and independence, which allowed Western states to use it as a platform to target Syria, Syria's permanent representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Bassam Sabbagh, affirmed. In a statement Friday during Arria-formula meeting on "Risks Stemming from the Politicization of the Activities of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons", Sabbagh noted to the importance of this session in highlighting the dangerous roles in the work of the organization, which kept it from performing the tasks entrusted to it as a tool to ensure technical, professional, impartial and independent implementation of all provisions of the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, indicating that Syria's experience during

the past ten years of working with the Technical Secretariat of OPCW witnessed unprecedented events in the history of the organization, and revealed many negative practices that its member states should pay attention to and review, insisting “The Technical Secretariat should correct its course.”

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=304448>

The army air defenses repel Israeli aggression that targeted points in Damascus countryside

Syrian Arab News Agency, March 31, 2023

The army air defenses repelled an Israeli missile aggression that targeted some points in the countryside of Damascus. A military source said that at about 12:17a.m on Friday dawn, the Israeli enemy launched an aerial aggression with bursts of missiles from the direction of the occupied Syrian Golan, targeting a site in Damascus countryside. The source added that the air defenses intercepted the aggression missiles and shot down a number of them.

The aggression left only some material losses.

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=304969>

Army units repel two terrorist attacks in Aleppo and Idleb countryside

Syrian Arab News Agency, March 31, 2023

The Army units operating in the western countryside of Aleppo repelled a terrorist attack launched by terrorist groups, killing a number of their members and wounding others. “Units of the Armed Forces repelled on Thursday, March 30, an attack by terrorist group on the Basratoun direction in

Aleppo western countryside” the Defense Ministry stated in a statement on Friday. The statement added that the Army repelled another attack in the town of Al-Dana near Ma’arat al-Numan in Idleb countryside. Several terrorists were eliminated and others were injured, while the body of the terrorist leader, who was killed during the clashes, was removed, the ministry statement said.

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=304995>

United Arab Emirates

Nuclearelectrica and ENEC sign MoU on cooperation

World Nuclear News, March 22, 2023

Romania's Nuclearelectrica and Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation (ENEC) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to cooperate on the "potential development and expansion of nuclear energy programmes in the United Arab Emirates and Romania as well as within central and eastern Europe". The two companies said the MoU would see them "work together to assess potential partnerships in operations and maintenance support of nuclear energy plants, capacity building and human capital development, as well as synergies in research and development. The two parties will share experience in developing financing and commercial frameworks of nuclear programmes, as well as exchanging knowledge on project management capabilities".

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Nuclearelectrica-and-ENEC-sign-MoU-on-cooperation>

Türkiye

Historic: Türkiye-made 5th gen fighter jet leaves hangar

Daily Sabah, March 17, 2023

In what is a historic day for Türkiye and possibly for global fighter jet history, the Turkish developed and made TF-X National Combat Aircraft (MMU) fifth generation stealth fighter jet left its hangar late Friday, according to an announcement made by the Presidency of Defense Industries (SSB) Chairperson Ismail Demir. Ambitious goals seen as dreams are being realized one by one, as Türkiye's fifth generation stealth fighter awoke Friday coming out of its hangar for the first time, and no doubt will soon start to flex its muscles. "In memory of our martyrs! We said that we will take our National Combat Aircraft out of the hangar on March 18.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/historic-turkiye-made-5th-gen-fighter-jet-leaves-hangar>

Embargos fuel rapid Turkish defense industry localization

Daily Sabah, March 21, 2023

“What does not kill you makes you stronger” is a saying that represents a summary of the breakthrough Türkiye has achieved in the defense sector despite a score of Western embargoes, which industry officials say only helped fuel the country’s rapid localization drive. The last two decades have seen Türkiye’s defense industry go through a profound transformation to eventually domestically manufacture a series of air, land and sea platforms. The country’s external dependence in the sector dropped to 20%,

from 80% in the early 2000s. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has hailed the success as a “revolution” and dubbed it Türkiye’s unprecedented march toward full independence in the critical industry.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/embargos-fuel-rapid-turkish-defense-industry-localization>

Türkiye develops new 'Azab' kamikaze drone

Daily Sabah, March 21, 2023

Turkish tech firm Robit Technology has developed a new multipurpose kamikaze drone called "Azab" with a long-range flight distance. The delta-winged platform, which has a high payload capacity, passed all flight tests successfully. Firing tests of the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) are planned to be carried out in the near future. "We have done all the flight tests. We move on to ammunition tests. We will carry out ammunition tests in the coming months," Selçuk Fırat, product director at Robit Technology, told Anadolu Anadolu Agency (AA). The ammunition tests are expected to be completed by the end of the third quarter of this year, Fırat said.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkiye-develops-new-azab-kamikaze-drone>

Hold the line: Türkiye touts new defense tech to build up border security

Daily Sabah, March 22, 2023

The first product of the Turkish defense industry’s Low Altitude Radar System Project – which is to strengthen border security – would soon be added to the inventory, the head of the Presidency of Defense Industries (SSB), Ismail Demir

said Tuesday. Demir's statements came as part of the 4th International Military Radar and Border Security Summit (MRBS), which has opened its doors to sector stakeholders and enthusiasts in the capital Ankara.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/hold-the-line-turkiye-touts-new-defense-tech-to-build-up-border-security>

Türkiye reveals its 1st flying-wing unmanned fighter Anka-3

Daily Sabah, March 22, 2023

For the first time, Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) has revealed the technical futures of Türkiye's first flying-wing, deep-strike stealth unmanned fighter jet, Anka-3. The state-of-the-art platform is expected to make its maiden flight this year. The features of the unmanned fighter jet and a photo of the aircraft were revealed as part of the two-day Military Radar and Border Security (MRBS) Summit held in Ankara.

At the event, TAI General Manager Temel Kotil stated that the Anka-3 Unmanned Combat Aircraft System is now preparing for its maiden flight. "We are counting the days to the flight of Anka 3," he said.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkiye-reveals-its-1st-flying-wing-unmanned-fighter-anka-3>

Türkiye's renewed main battle tank Altay ready for army tests

Daily Sabah, March 23, 2023

BMC Defense, responsible for developing Türkiye's long-awaited main battle tank (MBT) Altay, is preparing to deliver the revamped tank, which has reached the mass production stage, to the Turkish Armed

Forces (TSK) for tests on April 23. The tests of the Altay tank by the TSK are expected to be completed in 2024. In 2025, mass production of the tank will begin with the Korean power group, and it is planned to continue mass production of the Altay tank with a domestic engine in the second half of 2026. BMC Executive Board Member and Manager Murat Yalçıntaş, BMC Defense General Manager Mehmet Karaaslan and BMC Power General Manager Mustafa Kaval recently commented on the company's projects, including the Altay tank.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkiyes-renewed-main-battle-tank-altay-ready-for-army-tests>

US believes Türkiye should get F-16 jets: Blinken

Daily Sabah, March 24, 2023

Türkiye "should get" the upgraded F-16 fighter jets and modernization kits, said top United States diplomat on Thursday, in a move he said was important for NATO. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's remarks came as he testified before the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Blinken was asked about the sale of F-16 jets to Türkiye and the steps the Joe Biden administration is taking to "ensure that American weapons are not used to threaten allies and partners." "We believe that Türkiye should get the upgraded F-16 and the modernization package for the existing F-16," he responded. "We think it's important for NATO, important for the alliance."

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/us-believes-turkiye-should-get-f-16-jets-blinken>

Turkish drone magnate to unveil sea-based aircraft before test flight

Daily Sabah, March 27, 2023

The Turkish defense company behind the pioneering unmanned aircraft that earned fame for its critical role in several conflicts is preparing to show off its latest platform that promises to extend the country's drone capabilities from land-based to naval operations. Deployment of Bayraktar TB2 unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs) has been credited with helping tip the balance of conflicts in Libya, Syria, Karabakh and lastly, Ukraine. This pushed the aircraft's developer Baykar into the global spotlight and transformed it into a major manufacturer and exporter.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkish-drone-magnate-to-unveil-sea-based-aircraft-before-test-flight>

Turkish unmanned vessel test-fires with guided cruise missile

Daily Sabah, March 28, 2023

Turkish armed unmanned surface vessel (AUSV) named Marlin successfully fired a guided missile for the first time, using a solid-propellant cruise missile with guided ammunition. The missile was launched from the AUSV, demonstrating new capabilities in unmanned naval vehicles.

Presidency of Defense Industries (SSB) head Ismail Demir announced the achievement on social media, stating that the country is committed to advancing its capabilities in this field. "We are determined to reach new heights in unmanned naval technology," Demir said.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkish-unmanned-vessel-test-fires-with-guided-cruise-missile>

Turkish defense firm Havelsan counts days for 'digital troops'

Daily Sabah, March 30, 2023

The "digital troops" concept, which will serve with unmanned aerial, land, and sea vehicles developed within the Turkish defense industry, will take to the field this year, according to the developer company.

Unmanned aerial, land, and underwater swarms, new-generation wearable military technologies combined with command-and-control centers make up the digital troops. Havelsan, which has been working on the "herd operation capability" that enables unmanned vehicles to work together, aims to cross a critical threshold with this development.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkish-defense-firm-havelsan-counts-days-for-digital-troops>

Türkiye's unmanned fighter jet Kızılelma completes another test

Daily Sabah, March 31, 2023

Türkiye's unmanned fighter jet, Bayraktar Kızılelma, completed its third test, the medium altitude system identification test, a high-ranking official from the developing company said Thursday. Selçuk Bayraktar, chief technology officer (CTO) at the Turkish drone magnate Baykar, shared the update on his Twitter account with video footage. "Bayraktar #KIZILELMA has successfully completed the medium altitude system identification test," his statement read. The indigenous aircraft reached an altitude of 20,000 feet during the trial, Bayraktar said in the video.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkiyes-unmanned-fighter-jet-kizilelma-completes-another-test>

NUCLEAR AND ARMS CONTROL CENTRE

*Sylloge on West Asia is compiled by Mr. Kushal Agrawal
with inputs from Mr. Niranjana C. Oak*

Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses

**No. 1, Development Enclave,
Rao Tula Ram Marg,
Delhi Cantt., New Delhi-110 010
Telephone: 91-11-26717983;
Fax: 91-11-26154191,
Website: www.idsa.in**



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